



Michigan Emergency Management News



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Severe Weather Awareness Committee Reminds of Need for Preparedness

The Michigan State Police Emergency Management Division (MSP/EMD) is responsible for helping the people of Michigan prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters – both natural and man-made.

As part of that mission, the Michigan Committee for Severe Weather Awareness kicked off its 2005 Severe Weather Awareness campaign with a poster contest, media packets, and a governor's proclamation. Two MSP staffers belong to the committee, which also includes meteorologists from the private sector, National Weather Service, officials from state government and the insurance industry, and one local emergency management coordinator.

Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm's proclamation declared the week of March 20-26 Severe Weather Awareness Week, to underscore the dangers of tornadoes, floods and other severe weather, and to encourage preparedness.

April, May, and June are the most likely months for tornadoes in Michigan. April 11 marked the 40th anniversary of the devastating Palm Sunday tornado outbreak in 1965. A total of 48 tornadoes killed 256 people, injured more than 1,500, and caused \$500 million of property damage, according

to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Tornadoes struck in Lenawee, Monroe, Kent, Clinton, Shiawassee, Allegan and Barry counties, and five other Midwestern states.

The modern watch and warning programs began in the wake of the Palm Sunday tornadoes, as did the SKYWARN weather program, in which the National Weather Service trains a network of spotters to make observations of severe weather conditions and report their findings to forecasters.



Additionally, technology has improved dramatically to include Doppler radar, and NOAA Weather Radio, with its tone alert feature.

An average of 16 tornadoes occurs annually in Michigan. Since 1950, Michigan has had 869 tornadoes, and

239 people have been killed as a result. Last year, Michiganders experienced 24 tornadoes and severe flooding as a result of heavy May thunderstorms. The floods were the most widespread to hit the state since 1986 and caused around \$150 million in economic and property damage.

The Severe Weather Awareness Committee sent out information packets to emergency management coordinators and the news media to promote greater preparedness and awareness. The packets included a map showing tornado occurrence by county since 1950, tornado and flood fact sheets, safety tips, a map of NOAA Weather Radio coverage areas, and news releases.

For more than a decade, the committee has sponsored a poster contest for 4th and 5th grade students. MSP/EMD, in cooperation with State Farm Insurance, printed 3,000 copies of the winning poster with preparedness tips printed on the back. The posters have been distributed to every school district in the state as well as emergency management coordinators.

EDITOR'S NOTE: On June 8, 1953, the Flint Beecher Tornado killed 116 people and injured 844. The F5 twister brought winds up to 318 mph. (See article, page 6.)

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Comments from Capt. John Ort, Deputy State Director of Homeland Security and Emergency Management

No matter what we do in life, communication is key. Good communication can increase productivity, boost morale and reduce conflict. It can also save lives. But communication means more than just words and speech. It can pertain to technology such as e-mail and alarms, or it might mean color-coded terrorism alerts. For example, tornado watches and warnings alert people of oncoming severe weather and the possible need to take shelter. But watches and warnings would be ineffective if we didn't have TV and radio to disseminate the message.

Recently the Severe Weather Awareness Committee kicked off its annual campaign to encourage severe weather preparedness (story, Page 1). Forty years ago, a Palm Sunday tornado outbreak killed 256 people and injured 1,500 in Michigan and five other Midwestern states. The modern tornado watch and warning system was created in the aftermath, thus begging the question: How many lives would have been spared had this vital form of communication been in place prior to the outbreak?

Communication can also equip us with the knowledge to possibly prevent terrorist acts from occurring. Case in point: "The Seven Signs of Terrorism," an excellent videotape produced by Sgt. Jerry King and the Homeland Security Section. The tape has been well-received and is still in big demand across the nation (story, Page 8).

In addition to storm warnings and videotapes, effective interpersonal communication is essential if our personnel are to succeed. That's why several workshops in the upcoming Homeland Security Conference (story, Page 6) offer tried-and-true advice and techniques for enhancing communication skills. Training, always an integral EMD component, helps our people communicate more effectively, if for no other reason than it gives them a greater knowledge base from which to draw. In that vein, Lt. Mike Tilley is the latest MSP enlisted officer to attend the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Va. (story, page 6).

Communication must play a key role if the Emergency Management Division is to successfully carry out its mission of preventing, preparing for, responding to and recovering from disasters. It's up to all of us to ensure that it does.

Federal Funding Increased for Urban Areas; Overall State Funding Decreased

The State of Michigan was recently awarded \$58,516,675 under the federal Department of Homeland Security (DHS) FY 2005 Homeland Security Grant Program. This denotes an overall 22.7% drop in funding from the 2004 Homeland Security Grant Program. The only program to see an increase was the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) which increased 28.6%.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) identifies the City of Detroit and Wayne County as Michigan's defined urban area. Other components of the grant include the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP), Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program (LETPP), and Citizen Corps Program (CCP). These programs are again integrated into a single application kit. Listed below is a comparison table

noting the differences in funding:

Following review of the grant guidelines, an implementation plan will be determined in accordance with Michigan's Statewide Homeland Security Strategy.

From 1999 through 2004, the State of Michigan has received \$165 million to address deficiencies as identified in the Statewide Homeland Security Strategy in

the solution areas of equipment, planning, training, and exercising. Of that amount, \$128 million (78%) has been passed through to local units of government (through the local emergency management program).

Program Name	FY 2004 Amount	FY 2005 Amount	Difference	Percentage Difference
SHSGP	\$47,083,000	\$29,739,980	(\$17,343,020)	-36.8%
LETPP	\$13,971,000	\$10,814,538	(\$3,156,462)	-22.6%
CCP	\$978,000	\$377,549	(\$600,451)	-61.4%
UASI	\$13,673,444	\$17,584,608	\$3,911,164	28.6%
Totals	\$75,705,444	\$58,516,675	(\$17,188,769)	-22.7%

Am I Ready, or What? A Homeland Security Expert on What it Takes to Be Prepared

By Martin D. Alexander, Certified in Homeland Security, Level III

We live in turbulent times, don't we? Thinking of our recent experiences, we've had electrical outages, snow and ice storms, tornadoes, and the residual effects of terrorist activities. Somehow we get through them. Some fare better than others because they were prepared while others were not. Past events often predict future occurrences. We learn how to become better prepared. Are you prepared? How did the last disaster affect you and your family? What could you have done proactively to lessen the burden? Were you prepared?

We receive warnings from many sources, such as: the meteorologist who warns of severe weather and recommends we take cover; police who



A flashlight, battery-powered radio, water and first aid kit are among key items to keep on hand in case of a natural disaster or emergency situation. Dry food, personal hygiene products, candles and matches are also important.



Right now, it seems, our most serious threat is from terrorists. They threaten to harm us at any place, any time, in any manner. The government and most experts believe it's not a matter of if, but when, how, and where. We have been receiving ample warning and preparation time to get ready. Are you ready?

warn us of criminal activity and recommend we be on the lookout; firefighters who warn us of fire threats and recommend we take precautions; Homeland Security who

The Michigan State Police Emergency Management Division has prepared a superb guide, located at www.michigan.gov/emd. Contained therein is A Family

Almost on a daily basis, we learn of current warnings and advisories through TV, radio and/or the written media...Our most serious threat is from terrorists. They threaten to harm us at any place, any time, and in any manner.

warn us of threats to our local, state and national safety and recommend that we be ready. Almost on a daily basis, we learn of current warnings and advisories through TV, radio, and/or the written media. We hear it so often that many of us tend to turn a deaf ear to it all.

Preparedness Guide that is easy to understand and apply to your situation. This guide helps with learning what to do before, during and after an emergency; creating an emergency family plan; preparing an emergency supply kit; and becoming familiar with an

agency contact list. It also emphasizes that knowing what to do is your responsibility and your best protection. Another excellent source is This document provides a checklist for unexpected and prepare. Don't forget seasonal items such as blankets and an alternate and reliable source of heat for the winter.

These and other sources recommend that you have a "ready-to-go" kit for your home, vehicle and work. Make these 'kits' work for you and do it today. You can be ready. If everything stops for two or three days, you can survive without external help if you prepare.

Imagine the worst-case scenario and make plans. Inventories may get low, so don't rely on getting to the pharmacy to get your medication refilled, to the store for groceries, or to the gas station for fuel. Your cell phone might not work temporarily. The electricity could be out for a few days. You could be on your own.

Plan and act proactively. Do it today. Don't forget about your neighbors; especially help the elderly or disabled. When something happens, you want to be the person who can ask: Am I ready, or what?

New Opportunities in Exercising: Designated Models, Simulations and Games

By Laurie L. Raines, Exercise Grant Coordinator

The Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP) has expanded 2003 and 2004 exercise grant opportunities to include designated models, simulations and games (MS&Gs) in exercises. Products eligible for exercise grant reimbursement are listed on ODP's website, at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/exercises.htm>.

The website indicates that 100 of these MS&Gs were reviewed for their ability to support domestic preparedness training and exercising (T&E); however, it's important to note that only those designated for exercises are eligible for exercise grant reimbursement. Each MS&G was evaluated for functionality from a T&E perspective, and identifies eligible responder disciplines able to benefit from use of each product. Hardware and software requirements were also considered, as well as costs.



Authorized use of designated MSGs allows first responders to exercise in a safe, non-threatening, and controlled environment using a realistic scenario. This enhances first responders' abilities to prepare for, respond to and recover from a terrorist incident involving a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and/or explosive (CBRNE) element, as identified in the MS&G evaluation and information on ODP's website:

Some emergency management (EM) programs participating in the 2003 ODP Exercise Grant have already used MS&Gs and been reimbursed for



eligible exercise models, including airplane simulator rentals and the Abbottville programs included at ODP's website for tabletops or drills.

Advantages of using MS&Gs include:

- Exercise plans can be constructed with little or no experience or expertise in a specified circumstance;
- Plans can be evaluated by modeling consequences based on specific conditions and resources;
- Realistic, controlled and situational environments are provided for safer, less threatening, pre-planned response exercises;
- Real-time exercise events can unfold resulting from hypothetical terrorism scenarios involving weapons of mass destruction;
- The opportunity to simulate dangerous events involving nuclear and radiological explosions in an exercise, permitting a realistic scenario without actually exposing personnel or the environment to harm, and without expending actual resources like

Authorized use of designated MS&Gs allows first responders to exercise in a safe, non-threatening, and controlled environment...

personal protective equipment and medical supplies;

- Frequent elimination of real-world constraints, allowing for more flexible

scheduling of exercises while promoting increased participation in such activities;

- Frequent automation of data compilation, facilitating collection, evaluation and after action reporting, thereby hastening delivery of quality feedback (i.e., a "hot-wash") to exercise participants; and
- Variety in the breadth of scenarios and exercise types, recommended participants and selection of CBRNE element(s) to be deployed in the exercise. Each MS&G program's capabilities vary and are available at ODP's website in a full review, a "slim" version, abbreviated and full product review.

The Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program Volumes I and III also provide information on the use of MS&Gs in compliance with the 2003 and 2004 ODP exercise grants.

Participants should be aware that only those MS&Gs noted as authorized for exercises are eligible for exercise grant reimbursement. A printout of the review page from ODP's website must be attached to the corresponding Exercise Grant Request for Reimbursement. The use of MS&Gs is required to comply with the exercise grant reporting and compliance requirements of ODP & EMD.

Over the past two years EM programs have become more adept at exercising and have brought new staff on board to better assist first responders.

Here at EMD, we will continue to work with each program as we keep you apprised of new opportunities to learn about preparing for, responding to and recovering from terrorist/CBRNE incidents. We thank you for your time, efforts and commitment to exercising.

Motor Carrier Division, Feds Work to Prevent Terrorism by Truck at Border Crossings

*By Capt. Robert Powers, Commander,
MSP Motor Carrier Division*

Trucks and Terrorism. It happened at the World Trade Center in 1993. It happened in Oklahoma City in 1995. It can happen again. Threat of a terrorist act involving a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) continues to be a concern throughout our nation. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge reiterated this concern in July 2004. In response, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) made \$9 million in special border enforcement grants available to the nine states sharing a border with the United States' largest trading partner, Canada.

During the past six months, Michigan has received over \$2 million from the \$9 million available to northern border states. This money is being used primarily to increase patrol presence and visibility at Michigan's three international borders (Detroit, Port Huron, and Sault Saint Marie). The border grant is also being used for the purchase of equipment (computers, digital cameras, communications equipment) and to fund advanced training in hazardous materials regulation, narcotics interdiction, and topics related to terrorism.

The reason Michigan received such a large share of the \$9 million is simple. With a total annual volume of 5,295,480 truck crossings, Michigan's three international borders account for more than half of the truck traffic crossing between the United States and Canada. The Ambassador Bridge, between Detroit and Windsor is the busiest single border crossing for trucks in North America, with an annual volume of 3,265,992.



The Blue Water Bridge between Port Huron and Sarnia saw 1,696,056 truck crossings in 2004. Of lesser volume, but certainly not of lesser importance are the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel and the International Bridge in

The Ambassador Bridge is the busiest single border crossing for trucks in North America, with an annual volume of 3,265,992.

Sault Saint Marie, with truck crossing volumes of 207,444 and 125,988, respectively.

Each of these facilities has its unique place of importance in homeland security. The auto industry is extremely dependent upon the Ambassador Bridge to maintain its fragile just-on-time delivery schedules. The Blue Water Bridge is critical to the movement of hazardous materials between Michigan and Ontario, as hazmat is severely restricted at the other crossings. The International Bridge is a critical piece of infrastructure, not only due to its location, but because a terrorist act targeting this structure could result in a closure of the Soo Locks and a disruption of Great Lakes shipping.

The Michigan State Police Motor Carrier Division has always had a presence at our international border crossings. The FMCSA Border Grant enabled motor carrier officers to be deployed at the borders 24/7 and in greater numbers during the period of time spanning the U.S. presidential elections, the Christmas holiday period, the Presidential Inauguration and Iraqi Elections. This

grant will also be used as seed money to fund 10 permanent motor carrier officer positions to be deployed at the borders.

The Motor Carrier Division is not working alone at the borders. Motor Carrier Officers work collaboratively with U.S. Customs and Border Protection, troopers, and county and city law enforcement. Bridge and tunnel operators have also lent their support to our homeland security efforts. In addition to conducting vehicle/driver contacts based upon probable cause, Motor Carrier Officers also conduct random in-spections so that every CMV crossing the border is subject to inspection, which involves both inbound and outbound traffic. One of the challenges all agencies working at the border face is ensuring safety and security while not impeding



the timely and efficient movement of trucks at the borders.

Thus far it appears this challenge is being met. Another challenge for enforcement is the timely sharing of information. This is a challenge, that while being met, will require continued focus and cooperation by all agencies. The members of the Motor Carrier Division remain strongly committed to working cooperatively with all stakeholders to provide a safe and secure commercial motor vehicle transportation system for Michigan and our neighbor to the north, Canada.

Flint Beecher Tornado was Michigan's Worst; F5 Twister Killed 116, Injured 844

It was nearly 52 years ago – June 8, 1953 – when a devastating tornado cut a swath through northern Genesee County, killing more than 100 and leveling hundreds of trees, homes and buildings in Flint's Beecher District.

The Flint Beecher Tornado was a Category F5, with estimated wind speeds of 261 to 318 miles per hour, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The twister was spawned 2 miles north of Flushing, then tracked east across the north side of Flint to as far as 2 miles east of Lapeer, leaving a 27-mile-long path of death and destruction.

A total of 116 people were killed and 844 injured. Damages were estimated at \$19 million (about \$130 million in today's dollars). The tornado, described by the *Flint Journal* as "an ugly, dancing black cloud with a ball of fire in it," was the ninth deadliest in American history, and the last one to claim more than 100 fatalities, according to NOAA.

NOAA's web site says the storm was spawned when a mass of warm, humid air from the Ohio Valley collided with a strong cold front moving eastward from Wisconsin into Michigan. Severe thunderstorms started late in the afternoon, with some becoming tornadoes in an area from Alpena in northern Michigan to Cleveland in northern Ohio.

The National Weather Service issued severe weather bulletins prior to the tornadoes, but tornado watches and warnings did not exist.

Lt Tilley Latest MSP Enlisted To Attend FBI Academy

The Michigan State Police Emergency Management Division is blessed with an abundance of highly qualified employees, in large part because of its emphasis on training.

Lt. Mike Tilley, a 26-year MSP veteran, is the latest in a series of enlisted officers selected to attend the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia.

The 11-week academy includes training for 200 new FBI special agents and 100 appointed command-level officers from police agencies nationwide. Tilley began his training in January, and attended through March.



"The FBI National Academy is very well thought of in police training circles," Tilley said. "I feel very fortunate to have been selected to attend."

"The FBI National Academy continues to instruct law enforcement leaders on how to anticipate and respond to community needs," said Insp. Kriste Etue. "It was empowering to learn how their values of Courage, Integrity, and Expertise mirror those of the Michigan State Police."

The academy's mission is to enhance the personal and professional development of experienced law enforcement officers by providing training and education to increase their information networks and prepare them for complex and dynamic leadership roles in the law enforcement community. Courses include physical training, forensics, interrogation, computer crimes, counterterrorism, behavioral science, national security and criminal law.

Tilley resides in Charlevoix, and is currently the District Coordinator for 17 northern Michigan counties for the State Emergency Management Division.

Other EMD employees who have attended the academy include Insp. Etue, F/Lt. Ralph Hobrat, and Lt. Mark Martinez. F/Lt. Chuck Loader is slated to attend in April. Tilley can be reached at Tilleym@michigan.gov.

Homeland Security Conference is May 4-6

The 2005 Michigan Homeland Security Training Conference will be held on May 4-6 at DeVos Place in Grand Rapids. This year's conference theme is "Taking it to the Next Level."

Speakers who will share their experiences and expertise include George J. Tenet, former CIA director; Dr. David Kay, former chief U.N. weapons inspector; Dr. Gregory A Poland of the Mayo Clinic; Mary Carouba, co-author of "Women at Ground Zero"; and Gregory A. Thomas of Columbia University.

Valuable workshops are scheduled for training and current information in communication skills, school safety, medical preparedness, planning techniques, grant management and other topics. For conference and registration information, log on to www.michigan.gov/emd.

Conference applications should be faxed to the Hazmat Training Center at 517-322-6442 as soon as possible, with selected workshops, to secure attendance.

Questions should be directed to Jackie Hampton via e-mail, at hamptonja@michigan.gov.

UPCOMING TRAINING

EMD Training Opportunities

For more information you may contact the Training and Exercise Section at 517-333-5034 or by visiting our website at www.michigan.gov/emd

Date	Course	Location
May 4-6	Homeland Security Conference	Grand Rapids
May 12	Damage Assessment (G-230)	Detroit
May 25-26	Public Information Officers (PIO) Workshop (G290)	Lansing
June 1-2	Public Information Officers Course	Alpena
June 8	Developing Volunteer Resources	Lansing
June 9-10	Rescheduled Exercise Design and Evaluation (invitation only)	



For cost information you may contact the Hazardous Materials Training Center at 517-322-1190 or visit our website at www.michigan.gov/emd.

Course	Dates
Hazmat Transportation Specialist	May 9-13
Emergency Response to Hazmat Incidents (EPA 165.15)	May 16-20
Prevention & Response to Suicide Bombing Incidents	June 1 & 23; July 7; Aug. 10; Sept. 13
Unified Incident Command System	June 4-5
Hospital Decon for CBRNE/WMD Incidents	July 28
Rope Rescue Operations -- MUSAR	Aug. 25-29; Sept. 12-16

EMI Encourages Local EMs to Complete Independent Study Training as Groups

Since local emergency management personnel will be required to complete IS-700 (and probably IS-800), the Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends local governments encourage their emergency response personnel to take the Independent Studies (IS) course as a group.

The difficulty individuals have had logging onto the test web site is a primary reason, and the opportunity for group discussion of questions and answers is also important. The IS web site is <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/crslist.asp>.

IS-700 instructor materials are available for locals who decide to do group testing. To test as a group, call the IS office (301-447-7211) weekdays from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. EST, to order answer sheets. Locals can send in a batch of completed sheets, or review and discuss questions as a group, then allow employees to complete the test online at their convenience.

Local officials ordering a batch of answer sheets should give the IS office at least two weeks to send out the sheets. The IS office will email results to those who provide their e-mail address.

Chemical Awareness Week is May 1-7; Educating Public is Key Objective

Michigan's Chemical Awareness Week is slated for May 1-7. The annual observation is intended to inform the public about the benefits and hazards chemicals present in our daily lives, and to encourage communication between local emergency planning committees, business, industry, retailers and farmers in offsite emergency planning for hazardous materials accidents.

Local communities are being encouraged to become more knowledgeable about chemicals. The Michigan Planning Committee Association and the Michigan State Police, Emergency Management Division (EMD), as well as representatives from organizations with chemical interests such as the Michigan Chamber of Commerce and Environmental Protection Agency, participate in Chemical Awareness Week.

Every day, hazardous materials are transported on our roadways, railways, and waterways, leaving any area vulnerable to an accident. Thousands of hazardous materials incidents occur each year, resulting in deaths, injuries and millions of dollars worth of damages.

Captain John Ort, Deputy State Director of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, chairs the Michigan Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Commission.

"Chemical Awareness Week is an opportunity for local officials to become more aware of chemical hazards existing in their communities, and to review procedures on how to handle emergencies," Ort said.

"The more you know about potential chemical hazards in your area, the better equipped you and your local government are to make wise decisions about how to manage possible incidents."

EMD provides training for emergency responders on how to respond to chemical spills and other hazardous materials incidents at its Hazardous Materials Training Center in Lansing. The center, established in 1991 in partnership with the chemical industry, offers more than 100 courses and trains over 3,000 students each year from the public and private sector on planning, inspection, response, mitigation and clean-up activities involving hazardous materials.

"Household chemicals have become a part of our everyday lives, including detergents and cleaners, air fresheners, lawn fertilizers and house paint," Ort said. "We must become more knowledgeable about the proper use, handling, transportation and disposal of these items to protect ourselves and our families."



Homeland Security Section Promotes 'Seven Signs of Terrorism' Video

A videotape on the "Seven Signs of Terrorism" produced last summer by EMD's Homeland Security Section has proved to be a successful educational tool and received positive media attention.

Numerous television stations have reported on the videotape, and some have displayed a link to the video on their web sites. The Pentagon and Department of Homeland Security, among others, have requested copies of the tape.

Additionally, the tape is being shown in schools across the state. It is part of an educational module included in the TEAM (Teen Education And Mentoring) program, which also includes posters, overheads and worksheets.

About 700 copies of the tape were made, and most had been distributed by early this year. Another 6,000 DVD copies are being made, and EMD will distribute the DVDs to first responders

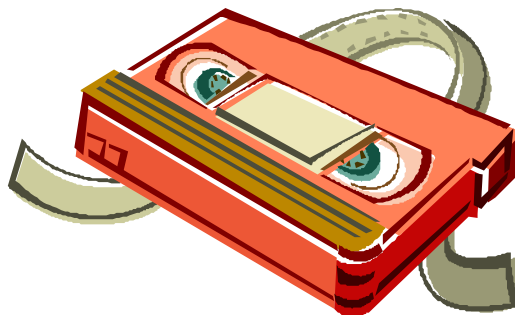
Seven Signs to intermediate school districts, provided the districts will use it appropriately. The video was made for high school-age students and adults, and presenters should be able to answer general questions concerning terrorism.

King, EMD staffer Jim Reardon and several volunteers from Port Huron produced the tape one day in July 2004, and included footage of the Bluewater Bridge which connects Michigan with Canada. Funding came from the FY 03 State Homeland Security Grant Program Part II.

The Seven Signs of Terrorism are surveillance, elicitation, tests of security, acquisition of supplies, suspicious persons out of place, dry runs/trial runs; and deployment of assets.

including fire, police and emergency medical personnel across the state, according to Sgt. Jerry King.

King said the Homeland Security Section is considering distributing



Small Business Administration Disaster Declaration Will Benefit Robinson Township Flood Victims

The Small Business Administration (SBA) has declared Ottawa County a disaster area as a result of Grand River flooding and ice jams in Robinson Township. SBA opened a Disaster Outreach Center in the affected area for several weeks to assist homeowners in completing disaster loan applications. The center has since been closed.

"When disaster strikes we are committed to marshalling available resources to help victims in our state," Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm said. "I am hopeful that we can work with federal authorities to bring needed relief to the residents of Robinson Township."

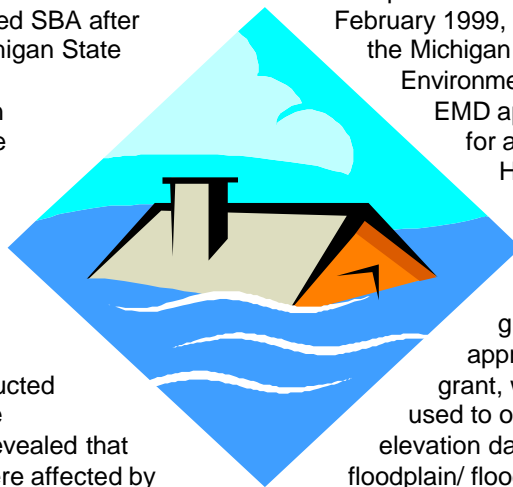
Granholm petitioned SBA after officials from the Michigan State Police, Emergency Management Division (EMD) determined the amount of damage in the township does not qualify for a state or federal Major Disaster Declaration. On Feb. 8, EMD, local and federal officials conducted a preliminary damage assessment, which revealed that 23 primary homes were affected by the flooding.

Affected residents were evacuated, and most are residing with relatives. Utilities in the area have been turned off and power is not expected to be restored until flooded buildings are inspected and approved for re-entry during the next few weeks.

EMD also assisted Robinson Township with two grant applications seeking just over \$5 million in federal Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) funds for projects which would be met by a 25 percent local match. The applications were submitted to FEMA on March 14. A national panel will decide which grant proposals will be chosen. The voluntary program calls for buying out flood-prone homes in the affected area.

Under the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, Robinson Township must submit a mitigation plan as a condition of receiving funding assistance through the PDM program. Beginning in February, EMD planners spearheaded plan development efforts with assistance from county and township officials. A draft plan was completed in mid-March and adopted by Robinson Township. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) must approve the plan by May 1 for Robinson Township to be grant-eligible.

EMD has helped the county and township on other occasions. In February 1999, on behalf of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, EMD applied to FEMA for a \$40,000 Hazard



Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) grant. FEMA approved the grant, which was used to obtain digital elevation data for a floodplain/ floodway map of Robinson Township. The data and maps help the township manage its floodplain, and are useful in development of official FEMA maps.

In February 2001, EMD applied to FEMA for a \$833,333 HMGP grant to acquire and remove the most susceptible homes from the township floodplain. FEMA approved the project in July 2001, but it was eventually canceled and the funds returned to FEMA because the county withdrew its 25 percent local match prior to project implementation.

The SBA makes low-interest disaster loans available to homeowners, renters and businesses – up to \$200,000 to repair disaster-damaged primary residences; up to \$40,000 to replace furniture, clothing and other personal property.

Commission Nominates Four LEPCs for Excellence

The Michigan Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Commission has nominated four local emergency planning committees (LEPCs) for recognition of excellence by the EPA's Office of Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Prevention. The nominees were:

The **Oakland County LEPC** helped identify facilities with Extremely Hazardous Substances (EHS), determine vulnerable zones for the most probable release scenarios, and incorporated them into the Geographic Information System. This process has also helped the LEPC analyze the vulnerability zone for the worst case release scenario. The LEPC provided data maps containing this information to the county's 41 fire departments, and plans to provide industry chemical information electronically to first responders.

The **Berrien County LEPC** is completing SARA Title III, off-site response plans for EHS facilities within its jurisdiction. Its plans are unique in their use of overhead photography centered on the EHS facilities and surrounding communities. The photos are clearly marked with buffer zones and property boundaries, and identify structures with special concerns within each zone. Each plan is being digitized for electronic viewing by dispatchers, incident commanders, and the emergency operations center.

A week prior to last year's Chemical Awareness Week, the **Kent County LEPC** held an open house to celebrate its 15th anniversary. More than 300 people were invited, including former LEPC members, industry representatives, the local media, government officials, and police and fire officials.

The **Ingham County LEPC** and Lansing Community College staff developed a public safety announcement. LEPC members wrote the narrative, and the LEPC chairman recorded the announcement on CDs that were distributed to area radio stations.

Upcoming Events

2005 Michigan Homeland Security Training Conference May 4-6, DeVos Place, Grand Rapids. Questions can be directed to Jackie Hampton, 517-333-5051, hamptonja@michigan.gov

Visit the EMD website @ www.michigan.gov/emd

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